



## **National Commission on the Future of the Army**

2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000  
Arlington, VA 22202

**SUBJECT:** Minutes for the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA),  
Operational Sub-Committee Engagement with French Attaché

**Date:** 01 September 2015

**Time:** 1100-1222 Hours

**Location:** 4101 Reservoir Rd NW, Washington, DC 20007

**Format:** Round table discussion

**COMMISSION PARTICIPANTS:**

HON Dr. Kathleen Hicks, Commissioner

Mr. Scott Sharp, NCFA staff

MAJ Vinson Morris, Operational Subcommittee Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

**EMBASSY OF FRANCE PARTICIPANTS:** Colonel Didier Gros, Military Attaché,  
Embassy of France

**Documents Submitted to Commission:** None

**Meeting Summary**

The Commission continues to meet with allied and partner nations to capture their perspectives as the United States balances the size and mix of the Army and resources. The Commission is cognizant of United States security interests, and those of its partners and allies are inextricably linked. Engaging key allies to understand their perspectives in balancing national security risk in light of declining defense is an important element of the Commission's deliberative effort.

Dr. Hicks explained the Commission's responsibilities. The DFO explained the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) provisions governing the Commission's work. The following topics were then discussed:

1. Security trends. COL Gros discussed two emerging issues of concern to future security: globalization and increasing domestic threats. Globalization is not always a positive; it can also result in fragmentation of society, including by increasing inequality within and between societies. Secondly, increasing threats within society such as radicalization and home-grown terrorism will continue to threaten security. The world is

rapidly changing and there is a perception the US cannot imagine a world with a peer competitor.

2. French effort to reorganize its Army. COL Gros explained the French efforts to reorganize its Army for full-spectrum capability. France understands it must maintain the capability to intervene abroad. At the same time, France believes the French Army has a requirement to provide internal security as a priority. The French Army's goal is to serve the people of France; and the French Army wants to avoid being viewed as only an expeditionary force disconnected from the state.

3. European security. A strong Europe improves global security. Currently, too many countries are dependent upon the US for security, which has inhibited the development of a European strategic sensibility. Most Europeans are more concerned with instability in the Middle East and its effects on Europe (e.g., migration) than with threats coming from Russia. NATO can manage a Russian military threat, but threats from the Middle East and North Africa can come deep into European territory, both physically and psychologically.

4. Perception of the US Army. The US Army is viewed as a very professional force. Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom have proven the US forces are excellent at operational level actions. The US Army is large and operates via a rigid command structure. A large active force allows the US to operate effectively in a rigid construct. Though the Army talks about executing decentralized operations, it is not ingrained in US military culture. In contrast, if you are a smaller force you have to be decentralized in order to accomplish all mission essential tasks.

5. Adaptable US Military Officers. COL Gros spoke on the topic of building adaptable military officers. US Army officers often do not have a broad general knowledge background needed to inform the context of operations. Professional development beyond the operational realm should be valued.

7. US capabilities required by French forces and view on force rotations. The French Army relies on US forces to provide logistics, intelligence surveillance and intelligence (ISR), command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I), and aerial lift. Rotational forces allow more flexibility and build US cultural knowledge across a broader cross-section of the US force. Europeans can provide maneuver forces, but the US is needed for key enablers, especially command and control.

8. Views on the US Army's mission in the future. The US should maintain the capability to send troops abroad. The US must maintain a large enough force to support the

Minutes for the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA), Operational Sub-Committee Engagement with French Attaché

home front and deal with a catastrophe abroad. Currently, the US is the only country capable of providing security in the event of a catastrophe abroad.

COL Gros is open to subsequent discussions to ensure the Commission has any information required. The meeting adjourned at 1222 hrs.